


Spring 2019

The Incidence and Impact of Workplace Incivility: A Quantitative Study Comparing Public University Staff Member Experiences in the Northeast

Tracy St. Pierre
University of Southern Maine

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/thinking_matters

 Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), [Leadership Studies Commons](#), [Social Psychology and Interaction Commons](#), and the [Work, Economy and Organizations Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

St. Pierre, Tracy, "The Incidence and Impact of Workplace Incivility: A Quantitative Study Comparing Public University Staff Member Experiences in the Northeast" (2019). *Thinking Matters Symposium*. 214.
https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/thinking_matters/214

This Poster Session is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at USM Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Thinking Matters Symposium by an authorized administrator of USM Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jessica.c.hovey@maine.edu.

The Incidence and Impact of Workplace Incivility: A Quantitative Study Of Public University Staff Member Experiences in the Northeast

ABSTRACT

Workplace incivility (WI) is similar to sexual harassment or bullying in that it is unwanted behavior and can cause negative emotions for those who experience it. However, it lacks the clear definition and legal repercussions that have been established for sexual harassment and bullying. Thus, incivility is able to thrive in the workplace with little intervention and can create adverse consequences for employees and organizations.

The goal of this study is to explore the incidences of workplace incivility in higher education, which relies heavily on personnel for its daily operations, and to enlighten managers and human resource personnel to the value of proactively addressing workplace incivility.

WHAT IS WORKPLACE INCIVILITY?

Researchers have established that workplace incivility consists of unexpected behavior, low in intensity, with ambiguous intentions of the instigator to cause harm. In addition, research has led to the development of three types of workplace incivilities:

- Experienced—employees who are the actual targets of workplace incivility
- Witnessed—employees who are bystanders when workplace incivility occurs
- Instigated—employees who direct workplace incivility towards a subordinate or peer

HYPOTHESES

WORKPLACE LOCATION

Hypothesis 1: A greater number of full-time staff at an urban, public university experience workplace incivility versus those at a rural public university. Of the 47 respondents who experienced workplace incivility, their locations were noted as follows:

- 55% reported working in a rural environment
- 19% reported working in an urban environment
- 19% reported working in a suburban environment
- 6% did not respond

HIERARCHY OF STAFF RELATIONSHIPS

Hypothesis 2: Regardless of campus location, a greater number of full-time staff members experience workplace incivility from their supervisor versus from their co-workers. Of the 47 respondents who experienced workplace incivility, their staff relationships were noted as follows:

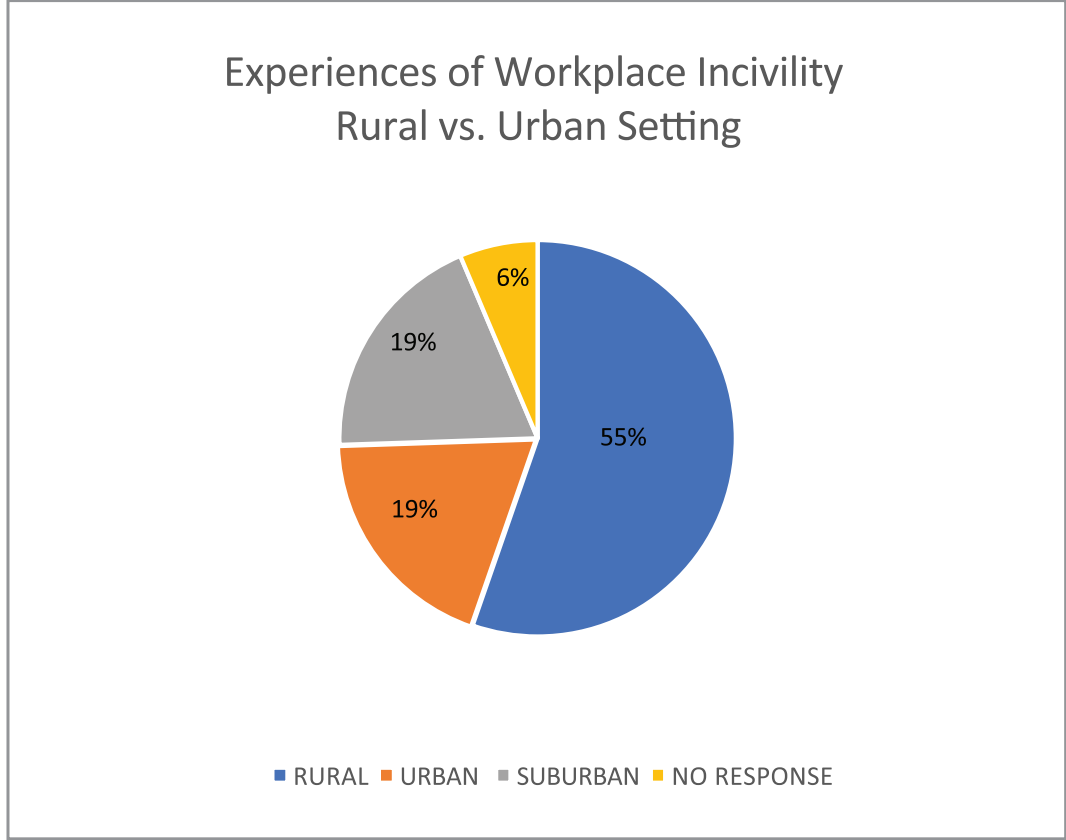
- 47% reported experiencing workplace incivility from their supervisor
- 40% reported experiencing workplace incivility from someone who is a colleague but with a higher title than their own (CH)
- 36% reported workplace incivility from those with similar or the same title as their own (C)
- 21% reported as experiencing workplace incivility from someone with a lower title than their own (CL)

UNION COVERAGE

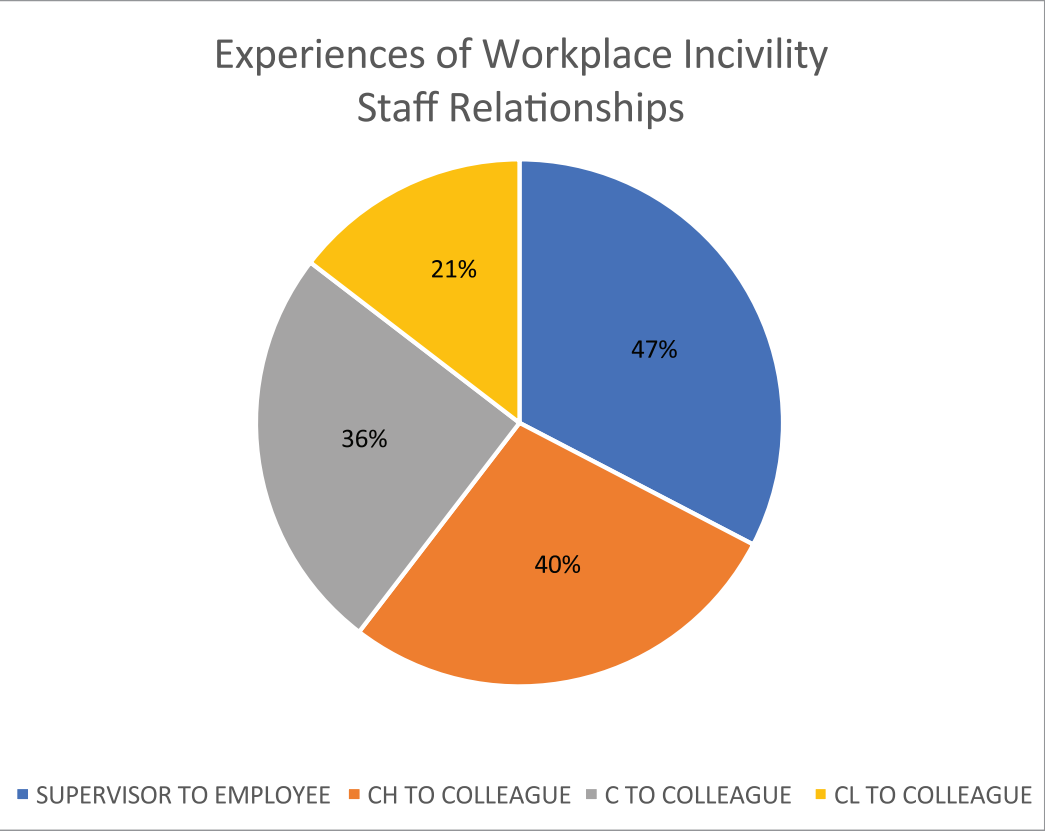
Hypothesis 3: Regardless of campus location, a greater number of full-time, unionized staff members experience workplace incivility than full-time, non-unionized staff. Of the 47 respondents who experienced workplace incivility, their union coverage was noted as follows:

- 72% of respondents who experienced workplace incivility reported as belonging to a union
- 38% of respondents who experienced workplace incivility reported not having union coverage

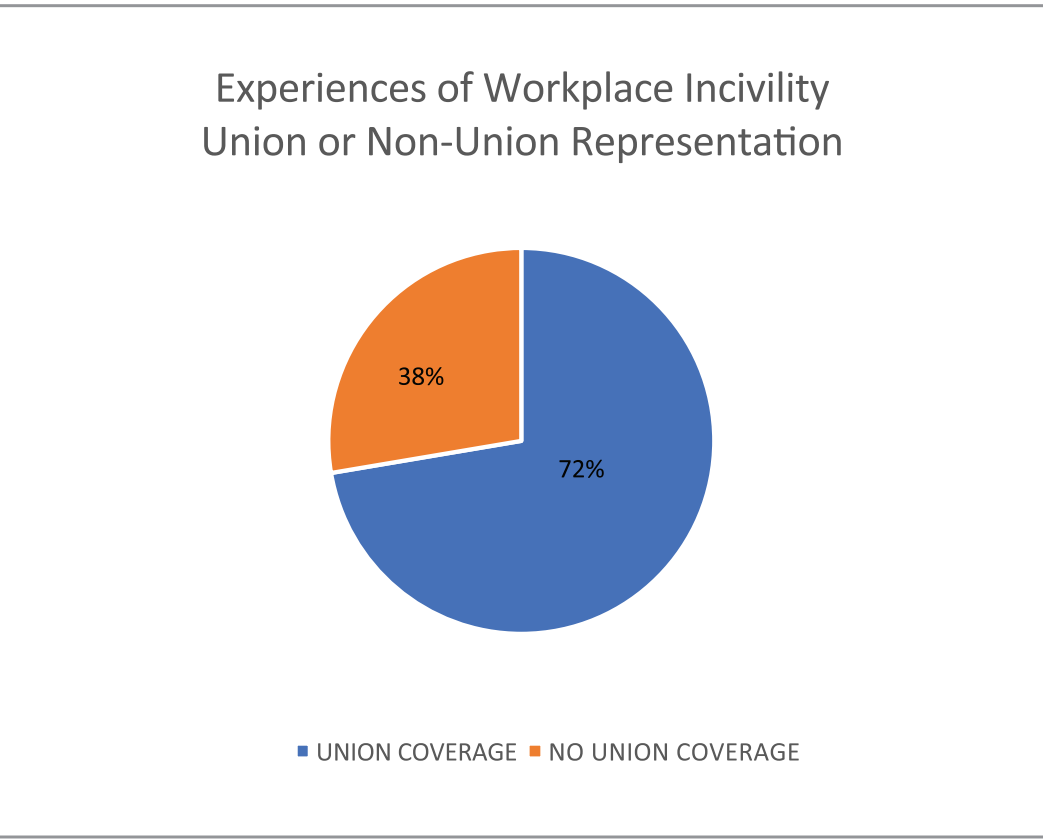
Workplace Location



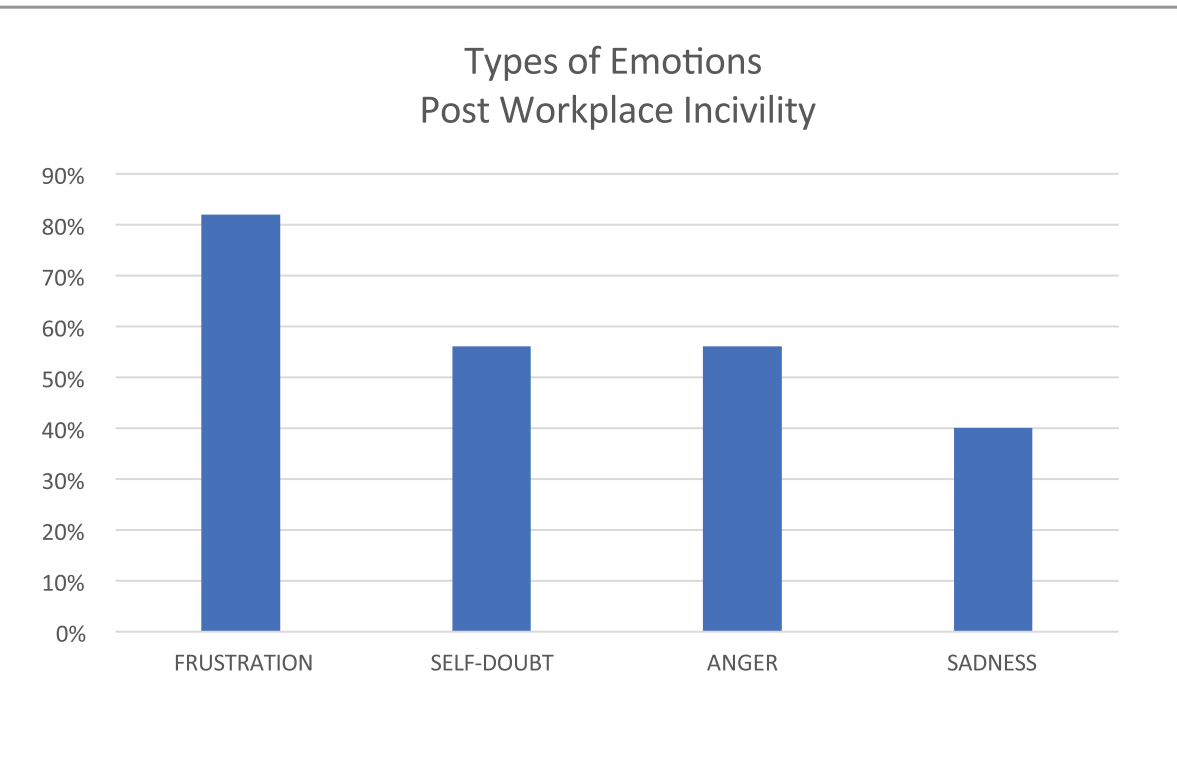
Staff Relationship Hierarchy



Union or Non-Union Representation



Most Reported Employee Emotions
After Experiencing Workplace Incivility



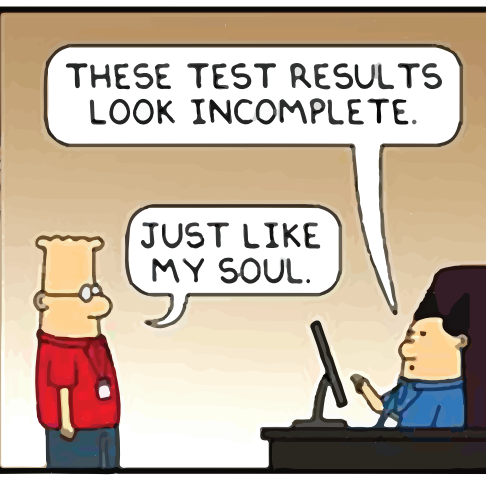
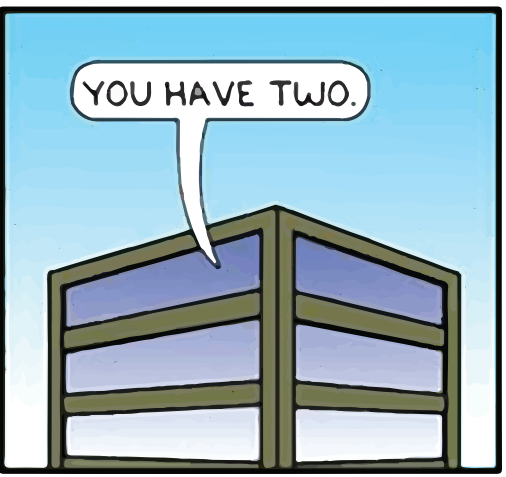
Top 3 Types of Workplace Incivility



DILBERT



BY SCOTT ADAMS



WHY IS WORKPLACE INCIVILITY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND?

Workplace incivility can have high costs for employees and their organization. The following staff reactions to workplace incivility indicate the extent to which employee productivity, and by extension an organization's ability to succeed, are affected:

- o 48% intentionally decreased work effort
- o 38% intentionally decreased work quality
- o 80% lost work time worrying about the incident
- o 63% lost time avoiding the offender
- o 12% said they exited the organization as a result of their uncivil treatment

MOST FREQUENT TYPES OF WORKPLACE INCIVILITY

- a) Top 3 from this researcher's survey
- a. Paid little attention to your statements or showed little interest in your opinions
 - b. Interrupted or "spoke over" you
 - c. Doubted your judgment on a matter over which you had responsibility
- b) Top 3 from Cortina, et al. survey
- a. Put you down or was condescending to you
 - b. Paid little attention to your statements or showed little interest in your opinions
 - c. Made demeaning or derogatory remarks about you

REFERENCES

Andersson, L. M., & Pearson, C. M. (1999). Tit for Tat? The spiraling effect of incivility in the workplace. The Academy of Management Review. 24(3), 452-471.

Cortina, L. M., & Magley, V. J. (2009). Patterns and profiles of response to incivility in the workplace. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 14(3), 272-288. doi.org/10.1037/a0014934

Cortina, L. M., Magley, V. J., Williams, J. H., & Langhout, R. D. (2001). Incivility in the workplace: Incidence and impact. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 6(1), 64-80. doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.6.1.64

Porath, C. L., & Pearson, C. M. (2010). The cost of bad behavior. Organizational Dynamics, 39(1), 64-71. doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2009.10.006

Schilpzand, P., De Pater, I., & Erez, A. (2014). Workplace Incivility: A review of the literature and agenda for future research. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 37, 57-88. doi: 10.1002/job.1976.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dr. Elizabeth Goryunova, Dr. Daniel Jenkins, Sarah Lucchesi, Tina Aubut, M.A. Watson, Kasey Gallant, Paul Froman, Courtney Randall, Tarynne Scott, and Jared Bourget.